

Western Drought Webinar

July 20, 2021

11am – 1:30pm MDT/10am – 12:30pm PDT

The 2021 Western Drought Webinar will assemble stakeholders, decision makers, and drought experts for an informational webinar on drought conditions and response efforts in the Western United States.

The webinar will include a summary of past and current conditions, looking at a variety of drought indicators such as snowpack, temperatures, precipitation, soil moisture, etc. Outlook information for drought, heat, and wildfire will also be provided. Potential and ongoing impacts from drought will be considered across communities and sectors, and Federal officials will speak to government response and relief efforts, with the goal of supporting communities impacted by the ongoing drought.

1. Introductions (11:00am - 11:15am MDT)

The webinar will kick off with opening remarks and a review of the goals of the webinar. Logistics for the virtual platform will also be reviewed, and the first panel will be introduced.

- Veva Deheza, Executive Director, NOAA's National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS)
- Dr. Rick Spinrad, Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- Tanya Trujillo, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)
- Gloria Montañó Greene, Deputy Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

2. Drought Conditions and Forecasted Outlook, Fire Outlook (11:15am - 12:00 pm MDT)

Presenters will deliver an overview of current drought and fire conditions across the Western U.S., and the forecasted monthly and seasonal drought outlooks. Speakers will provide a historical context for the drought to include 2020 influences on current conditions, including snowpack, temperatures, precipitation, and soil moisture. Speakers will refer to valuable online resources, including the U.S. Drought Portal (Drought.gov), where drought-related data and decision support information are available. Presentations will be followed by Q&A.

Panel 1: Current Conditions, 2020 Influences, Forecasted Outlook

- David Simeral, Desert Research Institute, Western Regional Climate Center
- Jon Gottschalck, Climate Prediction Center, NOAA / NWS / National Centers for Environmental Prediction
- Q&A

Panel 2: Online Drought Information Resources, Wildland Fire Outlook

- Kelsey Satalino, NOAA / NIDIS
- Nick Nauslar, Bureau of Land Management, DOI

- Q&A

3. Drought Impacts and Western Perspectives (12:00pm - 12:50pm MDT)

Across the West, impacts of drought are being felt in communities and diverse sectors of our economy. Presenters from multiple sectors and communities will speak about the drought-related impacts they are experiencing, including perspectives from:

- Jeff Schafer, President, North Dakota Stockmen's Association
- Laura Fox, EPHT Senior Epidemiologist, State of Arizona
- Nicole Vaillant, U.S. Forest Service
- Dan Keppen, Executive Director, Family Farm Alliance
- Bidtah Becker, Navajo Nation

4. Interagency Drought Relief Working Group (12:50pm – 1:20pm MDT)

On April 21, President Biden announced the formation of an Interagency Drought Relief Working Group to address worsening drought conditions in the West and support farmers, Tribes, and communities impacted by ongoing water shortages. Representatives from the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture will discuss the work being done across the Federal government to address the drought conditions, financial and technical assistance, and other resources available to bring relief and build more drought-resilient communities.

- Tanya Trujillo, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, DOI
- Camille Touton, Deputy Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation, DOI
- Gloria Montaño Greene, Deputy Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation, USDA
- USDA representative (TBD)

5. Conclusion (1:20 - 1:30pm MDT)

Concluding remarks will be provided on drought information and management resources, as well as updates for future events, including the Southwest Virtual Drought Forum in September 2021.